



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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NEWS RELEASE

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Patriot RC&D Council awarded \$269,000 grant to research improved erosion control at construction sites

**\$482,000 demonstration project
will be conducted at former Boston State Hospital site**

WESTFORD, Mass. -- The Patriot Resource Conservation and Development Area Council has been awarded a \$269,000 grant through the state Department of Environmental Protection with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a research project designed to improve erosion and sedimentation control, as well as storm water management, at construction sites. With matching funds of \$213,000, the project budget will total \$482,000.

The three-year grant, starting in the spring of 2006, will be primarily conducted at the Olmsted Green construction site in Mattapan, a 38-acre mixed-use development project on the former Boston State Hospital property.

The goal of the project is to facilitate the use of compost and amended soils to control erosion, manage storm water run-off, and reduce nonpoint source pollution during and after construction. The project will compare the compost-based methods with current standard methods such as geosynthetic silt fencing and hay bales. It will use compost and mulches produced and marketed in Boston, with donations of product from Apple D'Or Tree, Inc. and WeCare Organics, LLC.

A model vegetated "green roof" will also be installed and evaluated for its ability to retain and reduce releases of storm water. This demonstration unit, which will be planted with locally grown sedum and other resilient plants proven in other green roof applications, will be built on a raised bed where testing will be conducted. The unit will be accessible for educational programs and visitors touring the site.

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Participating organizations include City Soil & Greenhouse, Co., which will be involved in the design, installation, monitoring and maintenance of compost and amended soil; Soil & Water Quality Alliance, which will provide outreach and education programs; New Ecology, Inc., which will provide advice in green building practices; Lena New Boston, the developers of the construction site; Suffolk Conservation District, which will create an educational program for local high school students; and Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., which will design structural erosion and storm water control practices. An additional seven non-profit organizations, private companies and government agencies will provide financial and in-kind resources.

“The Boston State Hospital site was selected because recent construction there has released thousands of tons of soil through erosion,” explained Patriot RC&D Council acting president Joseph Lawless. “In addition, the Canterbury Brook was contaminated with sediment containing lead and other toxins, so reduction of future contaminants is a major goal.”

“Our proposal reflects a unique public-private partnership among a variety of stakeholders,” said Lawless. “We’ve also included a substantial outreach and education component in conjunction with the educational programs at Mass Audubon’s Boston Nature Center.”

The grant is funded through the section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Under section 319, states, territories, and Indian tribes receive grant money which supports a wide variety of activities including technical assistance, financial assistance, education, training, technology transfer, demonstration projects, and monitoring to assess the success of specific nonpoint source implementation projects.

The Patriot Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Area Council, Inc. (www.patriotrcd.org) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to managing, sustaining and enhancing the natural and community resources in the region. The Patriot area covers five counties in central and northeastern Massachusetts that have urban, suburban and rural areas. It contains 180 communities, 10 watersheds, and 4.3 million people.

RC&D is a program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) administered by the department’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) (www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov) that works through regional volunteer RC&D councils to promote the conservation, development, and use of natural resources to improve economic activity and enhance the environment and standard of living in local communities.